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Atari Online News, Etc.  
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"  
"\*\*\*\*\*"

Well, the next holiday season is upon us. The cold weather, some rain and snow, and the holiday sales. It's been one heck of a week! Although the calendar doesn't agree, winter is just around the corner.

Last week I mentioned that I'll likely be bringing back some articles from yesteryear regarding some of my memorable Atari experiences. That will still be happening. It's fun to recall some of enjoyment that I had once I got involved with Atari computers. I still remember my first ST (I still have that 520!). Going to my favorite Atari dealer (The Computer Cache), and pawing over the latest software and magazines. I remember my user group, and getting involved in its monthly newsletter. Did you ever attend an AtariFest? I did - quite a few, in fact. Being online at GENie, Delphi, and CompuServe in their Atari-related forums. There was a lot of activity in those years - mostly all good. The down sides occurred as Atari started its downward spiral. But I think that the enjoyment, mixed with the unbelievable faith of the userbase, kept things alive. It's still alive; we're all a testament of that.

So, stayed tuned to our future issues. I'll be doing some digging out of the archives, and we'll bring back some of those memories. In the meantime, if you have some memorable experiences that you'd like to share, drop us a line.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I'm afraid that I'm not going to be providing much in the way of uplifting dialogue this time around. Our family pet, a prairie dog, got sick and had to be put to sleep last weekend. He's been a member of our family for more than eight years, and it's hard to imagine him not being here anymore.

So let's just say that I'm getting ready for the holidays, and wishing you a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and hope that you'll remember that it's not just yourself you've got to watch out for while going out and celebrating... it's the other guy too.

This is a very special time of year. It's a holy season for at least 3 of the world's major religions. I keep thinking that there's a reason for that, but I'm either not smart enough or not religious enough to figure out why.

Don't forget to drop by the local homeless shelter or soup kitchen and make a little donation of money, food or time. If you have to think about what you've got to be grateful for, then you could probably do with a little bit of time in a quiet place thinking about what you've got.

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info available on the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup  
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Sam F. asks about running games on a CT60 with MiNT:

"Just wondering, what games will I be able to play on my falcon/ct60 running Mint? Also, will Backward run on it so that I can play some ST games?"

Greg Goodwin tells Sam:

"Don't expect too much. I got World Conquest running in 060 mode by turning off the cache, and of course most of the GEM-based games (those that run in a window, like Solitaire, Rosemary, etc.) don't seem to care what hardware they are running on. I haven't done a complete survey, but the handful of games I've tested on the CT60 didn't care much for the experience. I haven't tested Backward, but I'd be really surprised if it worked.

However, if you wire a little on/off switch to the CT60 you will be able to access 030 mode where the computer completely ignores the CT60. This is a simple rank beginner's project if you use a 2 pin connector for the CT60 instead of soldering to it.

If you use HDDriver, I'd also suggest having a small non-Mint partition designed solely around non-compliant software like games. Holding down the drive's letter at bootup will cause HDDriver to boot from that drive."

Ronald Hall asks Sam:

"Wasn't Rodolphe going to put a list of CT60 compatible games up on his website? Did he ever do that?"

Sam tells Ronald:

"I checked yesterday, and I didn't see anything on games compatibility. I hope somebody can come up with one."

Sam now asks:

"Are there any Atari Users' Groups left in the U.S.?"

Edward Baiz tells Sam:

"I belong to two. One is in my area (South Bend/Notre Dame) called I.M.A.G.E. and the other is in Chicago that is called S.C.A.T. If you want to join, just email me. The IMAGE price is \$10/year...."

Mike Freeman adds:

"Not that we're anywhere close to either of you, but we have a nice little group of three of us in Tucson, AZ (one of which I believe writes an article for your IMAGE newsletter - Dave Acklam). We don't meet very regularly or often, but from time to time we demo our machines or chat about recent Atari news over coffee or nachos. So, if you're ever in the Tucson area..."

Ronald Hall asks about setting up an Atari-based BBS on the internet:

"Can anyone give details or point me to a good FAQ/Howto for setting up an Atari-based BBS over the internet?"

I've got cable-modem service here. I run Mandrake Linux.

I used to sysop an Atari based BBS, via dial-up, back in the mid 90's, called "The DarkForce! BBS". I'd love to get it up and running again."

Derryck Croker tells Ronald:

"I still remember the days of the Tavern and Fortress BBS in London, I made some good friends through them. Best of luck with your venture."

Mark Duckworth tells Ronald:

"Well. You have two options. You could either:

A: Run the only native Atari BBS package. Octopus BBS and use an Ethernecc or some sort of internet connection to provide internet access to said Atari.

or...

B: Run pretty much ANY Atari BBS package and use a special program that basically converts telnet into a modem emulator, which will talk to the serial port of your atari. I know they exist, Not sure where to find one.

If you go the Octopus route, I'm your man as far as assistance is concerned."

Marius Diepenhorst adds:

"Try to get a LANTRONIX UDS-10 device. It acts like a modem but it is a LAN -> RS232 converter. So with that device you can have incoming and outgoing 'calls' like modem ones via the internet.

I ran my Atari 8bit bbs with such a thing. The Lantronix MSS-10 or MSS-100 will do too. But in that case you have to make a custom rs232 cable (easy job)

More info [www.lantronix.com](http://www.lantronix.com)

this is the info of the UDS-10

<http://www.lantronix.com/device-networking/external-device-servers/uds-10.html>

It is REALLY a cool thing. Not only for you, but for more atari fans I guess."

Ronald tells Marius:

"Wow, that sounds like just the ticket. I went to the website, checked it out, and ordered it from a distributor.

I'm sure that once I get it I'll have a kazillion questions, but just a couple for now:

How is the speed? Is it pretty responsive for the person using it across the Net?

No special software, aside from your BBS package is needed, I gather? I don't do Windows, so I hope its nothing like that."

Lonny Pursell adds:

"You might want to double check the rules regarding the use on your account firstly. Many cable providers do not allow incoming connections/servers and so forth running from home. That is the case in my area. I would be forced to get a business account for that."

Ronald replies to Lonny:

"Argh. I was afraid of that. So I couldn't even let users telnet in? Guess I'll have to call them."

Lonny tells Ronald:

"I think the term is a telnet daemon which at least in my ISP rules and regulations is mentioned as a no-no. Depends heavily on the ISP, you could set it up and they may never notice, or 2 days later get in trouble.

I didn't mean to rain on the parade. Just wanted to make sure you didn't get your account suspended by accident."

'Chris' asks for help with an EZDrive:

"I'm trying to get my EZdrive to work on my falcon and PC to transfer files.

I can format and store files on my falcon fine, I can do the same on my PC, but whenever I swap the drive over the PC just shows a blank disk. If I format on the PC and store files, the Falcon wont even open up the drive.

Should I be formatting in FAT16 or FAT32 ?? I had some limited luck with FAT16 but I was limited to about 12MB on the disk for some odd reason and I couldn't get more than 512 files on it, when I swapped to my PC I just got 3 corrupt files on the disk. I've tried messing with HD8, and out of ideas, it don't seem to want to work on both machines."

Uwe Seimet tells Chris:

"Simply create a TOS/Windows compatible media with one partition on it (also refer to the HDDRIVER manual). This is the easiest way for exchanging data. FAT16 is fine."

Chris tells Uwe:

"that did the job, I dunno why it wouldn't work the first few times I tried it. It's working now, I think in FAT32 mode, I think fat16 snuffed out at 512 files."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Video Games Help Hospital Kids!
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                                     PSP Hits Japan!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

## Video Games Used to Relax Kids in Hospital

Letting children play video games on a Game Boy in the operating room before undergoing surgery can help relax them better than tranquilizers or holding Mommy's hand, researchers say.

Doctors found that allowing children a few minutes to play the games reduced their anxiety until the anesthesia took effect.

Dr. Anu Patel conducted the study after noticing a friend's 7-year-old son was so absorbed with his Game Boy at a restaurant that he ignored the adults and the food at his table.

"We find that the children are just so happy with the Game Boy that they actually do forget where they are," said Patel, an anesthesiologist at University Hospital in Newark who plans to present her findings Saturday at a medical conference.

Patel said the findings could be helpful because many parents do not want tranquilizers given to their children.

Youngsters who are traumatized before surgery run the risk of long-term psychological problems, including nightmares, bed wetting and fear of being alone.

In addition, strapping a restless, frightened child to an operating table can cause a temporary blood pressure spike, make the heart race and trigger stress hormones that can delay healing, said Patel, also an assistant professor at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

Other hospitals have long used teddy bears and games to distract children before surgery, but those techniques are generally employed in patient rooms, playrooms and waiting areas, not in the operating room. At Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, kids are encouraged to play in waiting areas before surgery and to take a "comfort item" - occasionally a Game Boy - into the operating room.

A Boston company, Design Continuum Inc., has begun testing a combination anesthesia mask and headset that would allow patients to play video games or listen to music, but distribution is years away.

Patel studied 4- to 12-year-olds in three groups of 26 children each. All had parents with them in the operating room until they were anesthetized. One group also got a tranquilizer, and the third group played with a Game Boy.

On average, the Game Boy group showed no increase in anxiety before surgery. But on a standard, 100-point scale for measuring preoperative anxiety, the tranquilizer group jumped 7.5 points and the parents-only group 17.5 points.

Shani Willis, whose 10-year-old daughter Nykia had a cyst removed at the Newark hospital Tuesday, said the girl was nervous until she got a Game Boy. She then relaxed and played with it until she was anesthetized. "It was like she put everything out of her mind," Willis said.

The hospital is considering making Game Boy use standard before pediatric surgery.

Dr. Erin Stucky, head of the American Academy of Pediatrics' committee on hospital care, said Game Boys should be used more widely in hospitals if a larger study produces the same results.

"This is great because this offers a wonderful ability to have the child's attention immersed elsewhere," she said.

#### China Bans British Video Game for Political Reasons

China has banned an online sports game because it portrays Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and Tibet as independent countries.

As China gains more economic clout and gets a higher profile through moves like the recent Lenovo and IBM deal, bans on games and software highlight the country's extreme sensitivity about political commentary and global culture.

"China has been very focused on control, in every area of culture, and that's always included games," Jason Della Rocca, program director for the International Game Developers Association told NewsFactor.

Not only would game companies need to address the censorship issue, but China's lack of copyright laws make for widespread, unauthorized duplication.

"The market for China is huge, but most game developers aren't that interested in trying to get into it," Della Rocca added. "There are just too many roadblocks."

#### Sony Says All Systems Go for PSP Launch

Sony Computer Entertainment is ready for the long-awaited launch of its PSP (PlayStation Portable) device on Sunday in Japan, its chief technical officer says.

"I think everything is ready," Masa Chatani, CTO and corporate executive of SCEI, says in an interview. "Since we made the announcement of the price and launch date, we've gotten very positive and strong feedback from retailers and customers. Even Sony employees have provided very positive feedback and told us they are going to buy it. That's a very positive sign."

SCEI aims to have 200,000 PSPs available in Japan for its launch, which also marks Sony's entry into the handheld gaming sector. After the initial launch, it is planning to supply 100,000 units for each of the last three weeks of the year. The company's aim is to ship half a million units to Japanese retailers by the end of 2004.

Chatani wouldn't comment on whether the company will meet its shipment target for Sunday, but said it is unlikely to ship substantially fewer units than anticipated.

"We're still not launched yet," he says. "We are still manufacturing



day-by-day. I haven't counted all the units."

All signs point towards strong demand. Many retailers are planning to open their doors several hours earlier than normal and long lines are expected. Queues have already been seen at retailers taking advance orders for the device.

"So far, [the feedback] we've got is very positive from retailers. It's a good sign of it selling well but I won't know until the first day comes," Chatani says. "Overall, everyone has asked us to give them more."

The PSP has a 4.3-inch, wide-screen TFT LCD that dominates the front of the unit. To the right of the display are four control buttons for game play, while a direction pad sits to its left.

A close-to-final production version shown by the company on Friday had a bright, sharp picture. The device appeared well made, with a satisfying, solid feel. The game pads were easy to use and firm and there were no visible glitches or problems, either in the game play or the construction of the unit itself.

The PSP also features built-in support for IEEE802.11b wireless LAN, allowing them to connect to the Internet through an access point for online gaming and to download new games. Users can also use the LAN support to create an ad-hoc network of up to 16 PSP terminals, SCEI says. Other networking support includes a USB 2.0 port, MemoryStick Pro Duo slot, and IrDA port.

Sony plans to launch the PSP in the U.S. and Europe during the first quarter of 2005. Chatani offered no update on that schedule.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

#### Anti-Spyware Market Set To Boom

The deluge of spyware festering on consumer and corporate PCs will help to spark a boom in spending on security software, a new report from Framingham, Massachusetts-based IDC predicts.

Anti-spyware software revenues will rise from US\$12 million in 2003 to \$305 million in 2008, with traditional antivirus software vendors, such as Norton and McAfee, competing with dedicated anti-spyware companies for leadership of the market, according to the study.

Spyware, also known as adware or malware, is infecting millions of computers with multiple purposes: stealing personal information, enabling identity theft, tracking users' online activity, and selling the information back to anyone willing to pay.

IDC estimates that 67 percent of all computers - mostly consumer PCs - have some form of spyware.

At the moment, key players in the spyware detection market include specialist vendors, such as Webroot and Computer Associates-owned PestPatrol. However, the IDC report argues that anti-spyware will increasingly become part of antivirus vendors' offerings.

"Currently, some antivirus software vendors are more focused on spyware than others," said IDC analyst Brian Burke. "For example, Norton has not been as focused on spyware as its rivals, such as McAfee, but it is rapidly catching up and will be bringing out a product.

Spyware is very different from viruses, he noted, and is much more difficult to eliminate because it establishes itself in a computer's registry. And different anti-spyware programs will not all find the same spyware when they do a scan of a computer hard drive.

"What I think will happen is that the antivirus vendors will take the lead in tackling spyware because, in the corporate market, I.T. managers have an established relationship with firms such as Norton and McAfee. They will not want anyone but a trusted vendor getting into the registry of spyware-infected machines."

The IDC report argues that the biggest threat from spyware is in the enterprise environment.

"I see a massive business opportunity for anti-spyware vendors," Burke said. "Spyware is not just a nuisance for consumers, but an I.T. management nightmare for corporates."

This is particularly the case in small to mid-size companies, which don't have sufficient I.T. staffing resources, he said. "In some cases, infected PCs can become very slow, prompting users to keep making calls to I.T. help desks."

On the consumer side, people don't want anyone stealing their personal data through spyware that carries out keystroke logging, he said.

"But for a business, there may well be legal requirements for privacy, particularly in the financial services industry. Organized crime is now taking an interest in spyware, seeing it as a way to steal information."

#### Adware War Heading to Federal Court

Is all fair in love, war and adware? A federal court may help decide - as far as adware goes, at least - in a case involving software from one company uninstalling a rival's computer code.

Avenue Media, based in the Dutch Caribbean island of Curacao, is suing New York-based DirectRevenue in U.S. District Court in Seattle.

According to court documents, Avenue Media noticed in mid-November a considerable drop in the use of its product, the so-called Internet Optimizer. Avenue Media, which says it has lost millions of users and thousands of dollars in advertising as a result, blames DirectRevenue's software, which included a tool to delete Avenue Media's.

In a response this week, DirectRevenue said that Avenue Media had signed a distribution agreement with one of its subsidiaries to distribute DirectRevenue's technology. DirectRevenue claims that agreement inferred the right to uninstall rival products.

Both companies make technology, commonly known as adware, that directs users to advertisements based on their Web-surfing habits. Such software usually piggybacks onto users' machines when they download free programs, such as online games.

Many people consider adware to be a major annoyance because it can skew search results toward paid listings and blast pop-up ads.

### Experts Push for More U.S. Computer Security Efforts

Computer-security experts, including former government officials, urged the George W. Bush administration on Tuesday to devote more effort to strengthening defenses against viruses, hackers and other online threats.

The Bush administration should spend more on computer-security research, share threat information with private-sector security vendors, and set up an emergency computer network that would remain functional during Internet blackouts, the Cyber Security Industry Alliance said.

The Homeland Security Department should also give more authority to the official who oversees cyber security, members of the computer-security trade group said. The Homeland Security Department opposes the move.

"There's certainty across the cyber-security community that we are still vulnerable and we need to do more," said Amit Yoran, who served as Homeland Security's point man on cyber security until he abruptly resigned in October amid reports he was frustrated with his lack of authority.

An official with the Homeland Security Department's National Cyber Security Division said the 120-person office has been able to limit the harmful effects of at least one virus and has helped to track down online criminals in 28 countries.

"We've made good progress over the past year-plus, and continue to drive forward," said Lawrence Hale, a deputy director in the cyber-security division.

After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, experts warned that power plants and other vital parts of the nation's infrastructure could be compromised through online hacking.

Business and home computer users, meanwhile, have struggled with a flood of viruses, spam and other plagues that have evolved in the past year into coordinated criminal attempts to steal bank account numbers and other sensitive information.

The Bush administration developed a plan to improve security that relies heavily on industry cooperation and charged the Homeland Security Department with implementing it.

Over the past 18 months, Yoran and other Homeland Security officials have

worked to increase coordination between law-enforcement officials and security vendors like Symantec Corp. and RSA Security Inc.

The government has also struggled to upgrade the security of its own systems, which consistently get failing grades from congressional investigators.

Security experts said the government's efforts haven't been enough.

"I think we've raised the profile, but I don't think we got the support within the administration that we should have," said Art Coviello, the chief executive at RSA Security.

The government should try to estimate the damages caused by online attacks, secure online control systems for water-treatment plants and other critical infrastructure, and urge the Senate to ratify an international cyber-crime treaty, Coviello and other security experts said at a press conference.

One especially important move, they said, would be to elevate Yoran's successor to the assistant-secretary level within the Homeland Security Department.

House of Representatives lawmakers had included that provision within the massive intelligence reorganization bill, but Homeland Security officials convinced the Senate to leave it out.

#### Tech Firms, FBI to Fight 'Phishing' Scams Together

Internet companies and law-enforcement agencies said on Wednesday they will work together to track down online scam artists who pose as banks and other legitimate businesses, a practice known as "phishing."

Businesses will be able to notify the FBI and other authorities instantly when they see a new phishing attack - a necessary move when pursuing fly-by-night scam artists who close up shop quickly, participants in the Digital PhishNet project said.

"Speed is everything. Immediate action is key to not only shutting it down but to getting any information while something is still operating," said Les Seagraves, chief privacy officer of Internet service provider EarthLink Inc.

Phishing has emerged as a potent online threat over the past two years, combining "spam" e-mail with slick Web sites that trick consumers into giving out bank-account numbers, passwords and other sensitive information.

Phishing e-mails often come cloaked in the corporate logos of legitimate businesses like eBay Inc. or Citibank, bearing messages like "account update needed."

Internet users who click on a link in the message are directed to a Web site asking for their account numbers. Scam artists then resell that information to identity thieves or use it themselves.

Other members of Digital PhishNet include Microsoft Corp., America Online Inc., Lycos Inc., Digital River Inc., VeriSign Inc. and Network Solutions.

Nearly 1,200 phishing sites and 7,000 unique phishing e-mail messages were reported in October to the Anti-Phishing Working Group, a consortium of banks, online retailers and other businesses formed earlier this year to fight the problem.

Phishing sites were online for an average of 6.4 days before they were taken down, the group said.

Though the phishing attacks are growing more sophisticated since they first appeared in early 2003, consumers are becoming more sophisticated as well, EarthLink's Seagraves said.

EarthLink received 20,000 phone calls from confused customers when the company was first spoofed in a phishing attack a year ago, he said.

"Now we get maybe less than 300 calls, and almost all of those are, 'Hey you have another phishing attack,'" Seagraves said.

Participating law-enforcement agencies include the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

#### Supreme Court Will Hear Grokster Case

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear a case focusing on whether peer-to-peer software vendors should be penalized for unauthorized file trading when their software is used.

The Supreme Court decision follows rulings by lower courts that P-to-P vendors aren't liable for copyright violations committed by users of their services. In August, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled unanimously to uphold a lower court ruling that P-to-P companies Grokster, StreamCast Networks, and MusicCity.com were not liable for users' copyright violations.

The Recording Industry Association of America and the Motion Picture Association of America applauded the Supreme Court's decision. The two trade groups, along with the National Music Publisher's Association of America, brought the original lawsuit against P-to-P services, but a district court judge dismissed the case in April 2003.

By allowing P-to-P services to continue operating, the courts disadvantaged so-called legitimate services, Mitch Bainwol, RIAA chairman and chief executive officer, says in a statement. P-to-P vendors should be able to filter copyrighted material on their networks, just as most P-to-P vendors now filter out viruses, he adds.

"We appreciate that the Supreme Court has agreed to review this case," he adds. "There are seminal issues before the court - the future of the creative industries and legitimate Internet commerce. These are questions not about a particular technology, but the abuse of that technology by practitioners of a parasitical business model. Bad actors who have hijacked a legitimate technology for illegitimate means must be held accountable."

P-to-P vendors have argued that the music industry refuses to license its products to them and instead has focused on suing P-to-P users. Since September 2003, the RIAA has filed more than 7000 lawsuits against alleged file traders.

Public Knowledge, an intellectual property advocacy group, called on the Supreme Court to act consistently with its ruling in the 1984 Sony vs. Universal City Studios case. In that case, involving VCR technology, the court decided that makers of technologies that have significant noninfringing uses could not be held liable for copyright violations committed by their customers.

"The Sony case is at the heart of the technological growth for the last 20 years," says Gigi B. Sohn, president of Public Knowledge. "Now is not the time to hamper it or crimp it in any way."

It's understandable why the Supreme Court would want to hear the Grokster case because it's interesting, Sohn says. "I do hope the court confirms what the district court said - that is, technologies are disruptive, and [entertainment] companies always manage to respond to them," she adds.

Sohn and Adam Eisgrau, executive director of trade group P2P United, says the Supreme Court's decision to take the case doesn't mean it's likely that the court will overturn the lower courts' decisions. Grokster and StreamCast, distributor of the Morpheus P-to-P software, are both members of P2P United. MusicCity.com was a site operated by StreamCast. Eisgrau expressed optimism based on the Ninth Circuit's legal reasoning and the precedence of the Sony case.

"We are confident the court will find a path that will not stymie innovation in the interest of parochial entertainment groups," Eisgrau says.

#### Most Browsers Vulnerable to Pop-Up Attack

Security firm Secunia has issued a series of advisories, warning that most Web browsers are vulnerable to an attack that launches pop-up window next to legitimate Web sites.

"This is a serious concern," Secunia chief technology officer Thomas Kristensen told NewsFactor. "It could be a very effective way to do phishing attacks."

The Danish company has published five advisories, singling out Internet Explorer, Firefox, Opera, Konqueror and Safari. But Kristensen noted that the vulnerability affects almost all browsers.

The vulnerability can occur because of the way most browsers allow pop-up windows to launch. Browsers do not check whether the content in such a window is connected to the legitimate site.

This means a trusted site and a malicious site can be opened at the same time, and users will be led to believe that they are connected with one another.

The technique is common in phishing attacks, Kristensen said, which makes it particularly dangerous in terms of identity theft. "People could definitely be tricked by this," he said.

Browser vendors were contacted before the advisories were published, according to Secunia, but so far none have issued patches or discussed an

estimated patch date.

Kristensen is hopeful that vendors will act quickly to reduce the risk. "We think they should be paying attention to this," he said. "We're hoping to see some patches soon."

Until patches are available, Secunia is directing individuals to the firm's site, which has a demonstration that allows users to test their browsers.

Some users have switched from flaw-plagued Internet Explorer to other browsers like Firefox and Opera because they desired better security.

But Kristensen warned that every browser is a large and complex piece of software, making it difficult to prevent attacks completely.

Because of this, Secunia is focused on browser vulnerabilities because the firm believes that browser developers have a responsibility to provide secure products.

"Everyone who's online uses a browser, so these flaws affect many people," said Kristensen. "Browser vendors need to do everything they can to limit these vulnerabilities."

#### EU Wants to Make Internet Safe for Children

The European Union has launched a 45 million euro (\$60 million) plan to protect children from pornography and racist sites when they surf the Internet.

"Children are using the Internet more and more and can come across dangerous content. It's essential to inform parents what tools they can use," Viviane Reding, the European Information Society and Media Commissioner, told a news conference.

Around 60 percent of children regularly surf the Internet in Scandinavia and countries such as Britain, the Netherlands, Estonia and the Czech Republic, data issued by the European Commission on Thursday showed.

But most parents are not aware of the potential risks or do not know who to contact when they come across harmful content, Reding said.

The four-year EU program follows up a 38 million euro project that led to the creation of "hotlines" where parents could report illegal content found on the Internet.

It will increase the number of hotlines, finance technology to filter out pornography and raise awareness among parents and children, though it was not clear if the funds will be distributed to member states or used at the European level.

As an example of the project's value, Reding said existing hotlines, active in 18 EU states and Iceland, had helped the police to crack down on pedophile networks.

"Last month a tip from the hotline in Spain led to the arrest of 90 people, the largest operation against a pedophile network in the country," she said.

## AOL Locks Out IM Users

America Online Inc. has confirmed that it mistakenly deactivated a number of AOL Instant Messenger accounts this week as part of its regular cycle of opening unused screen names to new users.

AOL, whose instant messaging service is among the most widely used worldwide, had begun releasing screen names that had gone unused when it snarled the accounts of some active users in the process, an AOL spokeswoman confirmed to eWEEK.com. The Dulles, Va., company is working to restore the mistakenly turned-off accounts by Monday.

"This week, we released a group of AIM screen names which was overwhelmingly comprised of just such abandoned screen names," AOL spokeswoman Krista Thomas said in a statement.

"Unfortunately, however, a small number of active screen names was also inadvertently included."

AOL typically only reopens screen names from accounts that have been inactive for about 12 months or more. AOL would not say how many active users were affected.

What about IM use at work? [Click here](#) to learn about its impact.

The mistake surprised AIM users, many of whom took to Weblogs to try to figure out if they were alone in being cut off from IM.

Joi Ito, a well-know venture capitalist with Tokyo-based Neoteny Co. Ltd., wrote in his blog Thursday about receiving a message that his AIM account had been suspended when he tried to launch the service.

"Does anyone know what this error means and how I resolve it?" he asked his blog readers.

At least two readers responded that they, too, could not log into their AIM accounts.

"We sincerely regret the interruption of service which some users may have experienced as a result, and we apologize for the inconvenience this interruption may have caused," Thomas said.

## Coming Soon to an Inbox Near You: 'Spiritual Spam'

Internet users praying for salvation from junk mail face a new torment - "Spiritual Spam."

Along with the flood of messages offering everything from mortgages to miracle cures, they are now being asked to repent and pray.

"We are seeing more and more of it. It appears to be on the rise," said Martin Lee of e-mail security company MessageLabs.



"The God-botherers are using the techniques of the 21st century. It's Spiritual Spam and almost all of it is Christian," he told Reuters.

The prayers appear mostly to originate from native English speakers in the United States.

"They are very good at hiding where they are. A lot of the stuff is relayed through China," Lee said.

He said it is easier to act against the electronic evangelists in Europe than it is in the U.S.

"The United States 'Can Spam' Act only applies to commercial e-mail. If you are trying to save their souls, then it is exempt from the U.S. Act. But it is illegal under European Union law because it is unsolicited," Lee said.

The spiritual spammers are after souls rather than cash.

"These are old-style evangelicals wanting to spread the message," Lee said.

In one typical example, recipients are warned: "Eternity is a really long time. If you or someone close to you has not accepted God, please do so today."

Then came the prayer: "Deliver me from all my sinful habits. Set me free!"

Neil Hammerton, managing director of computer security company Email Systems, said: "This does not come from mass spam companies. It's people with requests they want to put out.

He said they use a database of well known e-mail addresses and spam software they ca\$48). for as little as 25 pounds (ddres

"They sit at the end of a Broadband connection and send out thousands of e-mails overnight," he told Reuters.

But he reckoned that spiritual spam still makes up less than one percent of the unwanted traffic that pours onto the Internet every day.

The latest review by Email Systems showed that medical content made up 48 percent of all spam. Next came pornography with 15 percent followed by gambling with 11 percent and mortgages with nine percent.

#### Experts Urge People to Unplug Occasionally

Katie Achille grew up with the Internet. She was 9 when she first tapped into it - and quickly became an avid e-mailer, Web surfer and sender of instant messages. But when recent computer troubles left her without regular Web access, something unexpected happened: To her surprise, she suddenly felt free.

"I find the break from the Internet somewhat refreshing," says Achille, now 19 and a junior at Rutgers University in New Jersey. "After spending a good portion of my freshman and sophomore years holed up here in my dorm room typing away to friends, I feel like I missed just sitting outside and enjoying the weather or going for a walk, just because."

As technology's influence in the lives of young people becomes ever greater, a few teens and twentysomethings are unplugging - getting away from the Internet and other high-tech gadgets, at least for a while.

It's a backlash, experts say, to being hyper-accessible by e-mail, instant message, cell phone calls and text messages. People are spending more and more time in front of a computer screen or futzing with technological devices. Sometimes, they just need a timeout.

"It's like being lost in space. You get lost in the world of the Internet, games or multiple instant-message chats," says Michelle Weil, co-author of "TechnoStress: Coping with Technology @ Work @ Home @ Play."

She and fellow psychologist Larry Rosen wrote the book after noticing that more people were getting stressed out or fatigued by technologies that are supposed to make life easier.

Dave Greenfield, another psychologist who specializes in high-tech issues, knows the feeling well. He regularly carries a cell phone, a pager, an MP3 player for music, a laptop and a personal digital assistant, otherwise known as a PDA - and says that even he often feels overwhelmed.

"Until technology gets 'stupid simple,' equivalent to turning on a light or a television set, it's going to eat time and energy," Greenfield says. Too often, he says, we're wondering: "Do I have the right adapter? Or the right battery? Or cable?"

He concedes that young people are often much better at adopting new forms of technology than middle-aged people like him are. They also widely consider computers and other high-tech devices essential to their lives, evidenced in a recent survey done by Harris Interactive for the Business Software Alliance.

A third of young people surveyed said they "couldn't live without" technology, while another 50 percent said it was "important."

Still, figuring out how to juggle that technology is a work in progress, psychologists and other experts say, and the solution is often dependent on the individual.

Amanda Lenhart, a researcher who tracks young people's Web habits, tells the story of one teen she interviewed who created two screen names for instant messaging - the second of which she shared with just a select few friends to avoid having to talk to so many people.

"She felt she was too in demand," says Lenhart, who's with the Pew Internet & American Life Project. "There are some people who love being in the mix - and others who are saying 'Agh, it's too much! I don't want to be part of the mix.'"

Ultimately, many people are finding that they click with some forms of technology more than others.

Achille, the Rutgers student, prefers phone calls over having to type to communicate. Once or twice a week, she uses her cell phone to call friends back home in Holmdel, N.J. - or, occasionally, sends them a funny text message.

"But that's where it ends," she says.

Mac McNeer, a 27-year-old Chicagoan, can't stand text messages, especially the ads his cell phone company sends to him. He also dislikes the idea of having to work out which keys on his cell phone go with which letters.

"Why would you take several minutes to punch in a message that would take 10 seconds to leave on someone's voice mail?" asks McNeer, who keeps his text message address a secret from friends and "tries to ignore" the ones who still manage to send them.

Meanwhile, Cobey Dietrich, a 23-year-old who works at York College of Pennsylvania, says she'd much rather talk face to face whenever possible.

She uses the Internet at work for all day, but rarely at home.

"If I'm getting good news from someone, I'd rather hear it in person so I could be there to be excited for them and give them a hug. Or if they're upset or hurting, then you can comfort them," she says.

At the very least, Dietrich would rather receive a call on her cell phone. But sometimes, she even turns that off - a move that causes friends and relatives to complain: "Why do you have a cell phone if you don't have it on?"

Indeed, having the ability to stay in constant contact makes some people feel obligated to be plugged in 24/7.

"There's a message that setting boundaries isn't right - an expectation that we shouldn't set those boundaries," says Allan Stegeman, a professor of communications at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

Greenfield notes that some people also feel pressure to keep up with the latest technology, whether they need it or not.

"It points to a larger theme in our culture - that new things are good and better, and that more is better, and faster is better. And that's not always the case," says Greenfield, who wrote the book "Virtual Addiction," which looks at the adverse effects of spending too much time online.

Greenfield recalls a recent fall trip with his 10-year-old son to a YMCA camp, where they were doing trail maintenance with a group of adults and other kids - no TVs, computers or even hand-held video games.

"These kids had no technology with them," he says. "And they were as thoroughly entertained and alive as I've ever seen them."

Weil agrees that taking a break from high-tech gadgets is vital - a point she often addresses on the public speaking circuit. The key, she says, is using technology to enhance life - and taking a step back when it doesn't.

"You need to have it," Weil says, "rather than it having you."

#### An Online Art Form: The Away Message

As people spend more time online - and logged into instant messaging services - it's inevitable that there are times they just can't respond. That's why the "away message" - set up to be sent automatically from someone's account - has become so popular.

In the early days, such messages were pretty basic: "showering," "at class," "eating" or "brb" (be right back). But now people are getting more creative.

Alan Danzis, a 23-year-old Web user from Hoboken, N.J., often relies on quotes from his favorite TV characters:

\_ "I know you'll never love me. I know that I'm a monster. But you treat me like a man, and that's ..." (Spike from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer")

\_ "Me fail English? That's umpossible." (Ralph from "The Simpsons")

The staff at AOL RED, America Online's service for teens, also sees pithy one-liners, such as:

\_ "What Im Lookin For Isnt On Ebay"

\_ "Beware! I shout out random facts!"

\_ " Life: Priceless For everything else ... 'Dad, I need your MasterCard!'"

And Jason Elsky liked the "to do" list his 22-year-old sister, Michelle, recently used as an away message after graduating from Indiana University and moving back home with her parents:

\_ 1.Get a job

2.Get a car

3.Move out of the house

4.Get a boyfriend

5.Dump the boyfriend and get a dog

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